MINUTES

OF THE

THIRTIETH ANNUAL SESSION

OF THE

PILGRIM'S REST ASSOCIATION,

OF THE

PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ORDER,

HELD WITH

BETHANY CHURCH, PICKENS COUNTY, ALA.,

ON THE

5th and 6th OCTOBER, 1866.

CARROLLTON:
PRINTED AT THE "WEST ALABAMIAN" OFFICE,
BY HENRY & GILBERT.
1866.

MINUTES.

The Association met on the fifth of October, 1866. The Introductory Sermon was delivered by Elder C. W. Scoggin, from Mat. 16 : 18.

After a short intermission, the delegates assembled in the meeting-house. The meeting was called to order by the Moderator ; Prayer by Elder Crecelious.

Letters from the different churches were called for, and the names of delegates enrolled. The Association now organized, proceeded to elect a Moderator and Clerk ; whereupon C. W. Scoggin was chosen Moderator and O. S. Harris, Clerk.

Called for the contributions of this Association.

Opened a door for the reception of new churches. The call for Correspondence was responded to by the following associations, viz : Tombigbe, Elders Oden and Flannagan, and a letter ; Zion's Rest, J. P. May, with a letter ; Buttahatchie, J. J. Halbert, with a letter ; Bethany, J. G. Crecelious ; all of which were received, and the right hand of fellowship extended to the messengers by the Moderator and cordially invited to seats.

Appointed a committee to arrange preaching during the session, viz: G. W. Wilder, T. Hicks, P. W. Harris, F. D. Smith, R. S. Meeks, R. B. Petty. The Committee made the following report : Elders Percell and Crecelious preach on Friday, on Saturday, Elders Oden, Flannagan and J. P. May ; Sunday, Elders Percell, Crecelious and Halbert close the meeting. Committee discharged.

On motion, appointed a Committee on Finance, viz : G. W. Wilder and T. Hicks.

Appointed a Committee of Arrangement, viz: Brethren J. Hill, T. Hicks, R. B. Petty, and the Moderator and Clerk. Report received and adopted, and the committee discharged.

Appointed brethren to write letters of correspondence to sister associations, viz : Buttahatchie, J. Hill ; Zion's Rest, T. Hicks ; Tombigby, R. S. Meeks.

On motion, adjourned until Saturday morning, half past nine o'clock. Prayer by Elder West.

Saturday Morning, 9½ o'clock,

Met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by J. G. Crecelious.

On motion, Bro. T. West was appointed Moderator, brother Scoggin being unwell.

Letters of Correspondence were called for and received and bearers appointed: To the Tombigby, C. Nance, D. Holly; to Buttahatchie, T. West, C. Nance, R. Massey; Zion's Rest, P. W. Harris, M. Hoggle.

Circular Letter called for and received, read, and ordered to be printed with the Minutes. The Committee on Finance reported $37. Committee discharged.

Appointed the next session of this Association be held with Five Mile Church, Greene county, Ala., (fifteen miles East of Eutaw,) commencing on Friday before the first Sabbath in October, 1867.—Brother T. West appointed to preach the next Introductory Sermon, Eld. Meginta alternate; N. Creal to write the Circular Letter.

Moved and carried that one hundred and fifty Minutes be printed, and that twenty-five be reserved for correspondence. Clerk to superintend the printing of the Minutes. Eight dollars compensation be allowed the Clerk for last years services.

Dispense with union meetings for the present. Called for promiscuous business. Minutes called for and read.

On motion, the thanks of the Association is respectfully tendered the citizens of the vicinity of Bethany church for the kind hospitalities extended to the members during its session.

On motion, the Association adjourned to the time and place designated for the next annual meeting.

T. WEST, Moderator, *pro tem.*

O. S. HARRIS, Clerk.

TABLE SHOWING THE CONDITION OF CHURCHES, 1866.

CHURCHES.	NAMES OF DELEGATES.	Sabbath Meetings	Baptized	Received by Letter	Dismissed by Letter	Excluded	Restored	Died	Total	Contributions
Bethany	D Daniel, O S Harris, G W Wilder	2		1			1	1	55	$1
Rehoboth	T Hicks, J Hill, D Barnes,	1							75	1
Pilgrim's R.	Eld. T West, C Nance, D Holley	1			1	3		2	25	
Providence	C Scoggin, J T Allen, * R S Meeks,	3	1						10	
Five Mile	P W Harris, W Harris, * M Hoggle,	3	2						0	
Salem	Freeman,* Jenning,* Strickland,*			2		2		1	13	
Macedonia	McGentry,* Smith, J & J R Creel,	1				2		1	13	

Absentees marked with a star ( ).

CHURCHES AND THEIR POST-OFFICES.—Bethany, Vienna; Rehoboth, Clinton; Pilgrim's Rest, Pickensville; Providence, Greene County; Five Mile, New Prospect; Salem, Carrollton; Macedonia, Alfonce.

CIRCULAR LETTER,

WRITTEN BY R. S. MEEKS.

Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Association, to the Churches of which is composed—Sendeth Christian Salutation:

R BRETHREN AND SISTERS—According to custom, and a former ment, you expect a Circular Letter to be attached to our pre- nutes. We know of no better way of entertaining your minds, resent occasion, than calling your attention to the condition n by nature, and God's eternal love, in making him a fit sub- the ultimate claims of eternal glory. Therefore, with much we will proceed and be as concise as we possibly can, God helper. We learn from God's revealed word, and by expe- o, that man, by nature, is as prone to sin as the sparks are wards. Although man was created upright, for we under- l created man in his own image, but subject to a change from a miserable state, we want, in the first place, to portray to the condition the fallen sons and daughters of Adam are eying God's law, and not able to extricate themselves from they are in by transgression, for they have run in debt d talents and have nothing to pay with. The feet are blood; the heart is faint, and the head sick—rolling sin ongue as a sweet morsel—compared to a cage of unclean n sin and trespasses. Sin is the element of man while in h so as water is the element of the finny tribe, as the f God abundantly proves: For in the day that thou hou shall surely die; which is too true to be denied.— e in the condition we have alluded to, and God too just with the least degree of allowance, how is he to be freed emnation which came by transgression and be made a ernal happiness. Man, destitute of all power.—"ye will e that you might have life," says Christ—which proves

that they have not the will and also destitute of the power. The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, and neither indeed can be. When the Ethiopian can change his skin, and the leopard his spots, then may they who are accustomed to do evil learn to do good, which all of God's people know is impposible with man, and to say otherwise would be attributing to God the highest blasphemy. We have shown the condition the human family are in, to some extent; and as all died in Adam, so shall all be made alive in Christ Jesus, but every one in his own order cherish the first fruits. God being the end from the beginning—yea, before man was formed, for God knew what was in man, and how the creature man would act before he created him, just as well as he does at present, for known unto God are all his works from the beginning, nothing new or old with the great I AM, for He devised a plan in infinite wisdom to save rebellious man, and that in the person of Jesus Christ; for the covenant of peace was between them both, and that, too, in the ancient settlements of eternity.—Isaiah 42: 6. "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." And the stipulations are these: The Father promised to give him a seed, not seeds as of many, to serve him—and as man had violated God's righteous law, and the penalty was death, it was necessary that there should be a mediator between an offended God and offending man, that the attribute Mercy might not be tarnished. So then we learn, according to God's appointment, that his dear Son made his advent into the world and paid the debt on the Roman cross that was due from man; but man was not able to pay one farthing towards reinstating himself in God's favor; for man's righteousness is compared to filthy rags, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. Love was the moving cause of the Son of God leaving the high courts of heaven and coming down into these low grounds of sorrow, for Christ was acquainted with grief, all his days, while tabernacling here below, was for the benefit of his people; and all the sorrowing, pain and grief he bore was to redeem his bride, the object of his love. For we learn that Christ was tempted in all things, tho' without sin, that he might know how to succor them that were tempted. We have shown, to some extent, the condition of man while in a state of nature, and what the redemption is, so to speak. We come to treat of God's eternal love that he had for his people before all worlds, for the promise is sure to the seed. God did before time predestinate or elect a definate number to eternal life, who in time should be operated on by the Holy Spirit and be made fit subjects for eternal glory, and not be drawn to heaven by the hair of the head, as some would say, for God's people are a willing people in the day of his power. Yes, poor sinner, God draws you by the sweet cords of his love; he loved you from all eternity, or else he loves you not at all. Now for proof. Jer. 31: 3. latter clause —"I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with love

kindness have I drawn thee." Again, Thes. 1 : 3. But we are bound to give thanks always to God, for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. So then we see that it was God that made the choice, and not man—poor sinful mortals who can't think a good thought much less do a good act unless it emanates from God. God's people are saved before they are called ; and good news is that to the poor convicted soul. Now for the proof. 2. Tim. 1 : 9. Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.— And what God once does remains, for God does not work as man.— Again—Jer. 32 : 40. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good ; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Then, brethren, we have proven that salvation is of the Lord, in toto, that is, from beginning to end, speaking after the manner of men, and that the *saints* shall persevere and never finally fall away, though they may do many things they ought not, and have to bear the chastening rod. They shall have their strength renewed in due time, for the christian's friend will never forsake them or leave them. John 10 : 28. I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. Again—Phil. 1 : 6. He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. We think we have said enough to show that God's plan is the only one that ever has or ever will do poor helpless sinners good in time or eternity ; therefore man's inability to work himself into the favor of God. Predestination, Election, and the final Perseverance of the Saints in glory, are the great cardinal points in the christian faith, and when rightly understood by God's people, loved. As we are commanded to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, let us be up and doing while it is called to day, for we are to show our faith by works ; for so says St. James, merely consenting to the doctrines of grace is not sufficient, but to act it out. Show to the church and to the world that we love God and one another, not out of fear, but out of perfect love—because God first loved us, the church. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. As we have said something about works, we want to point a few of them out to the brethren and sisters by way of admonishing them of their duty, for it is to living men and women in Jerusalem that we are addressing. It is a good work or duty we owe to God and to each other to abstain from sin and its evil consequences as much as within us lieth. It is a good work not to make assembling ourselves at conference meetings. It is a good work to administer to the wants and necessities of our poor ministering brethren, and not to them alone but to all the poor of the church, and all others in a distressed condition, either in body or mind, as

God may enable us with the me[illegible]ns, and encourage others to do the
same. It is a good work to me[illegible] our brother preachers at their ap-
pointments, unless providentially prevented; and also to visit the fa-
therless and the widow, with the sick and the afflicted. It is a good
work to keep up church discipline in the strictest term, and know no
man after the flesh, which is much neglected among baptists. At-
tending to the duties God has enjoined on his people is complying with
this injunction—"Work out your own salvation with fear and tremb-
ling," for it is God that works in you, both to will and to do, of his
own good pleasure. God's people are a peculiar people, and as such
should love and serve each other in the spirit of meekness; that is the
way for brotherly love to abound; for when Zion travails she brings
forth. Then, in conclusion, let us say to all God's people, love him
and serve him supremely, who has done all things well for his people.
Well might the prophets cry out in language like this, "Happy art
thou, O Israel, who are like unto the people saved by the Lord; sav-
ed from the gulf of eternal destruction; saved from the snares of the
wicked one—kept by the *power* of God through faith unto salvation."
Faith is the gift of God. Then let us live unto the Lord and not to
ourselves; keep our garments unspotted by the flesh. Then we will
have joyful times in the Lord, for they that wait upon the Lord shall
have their strength renewed. And now may God guide and direct
his people in all the ways he would have them to walk while in the
flesh, and when taken from the shores of time, give them a happy ad-
mittance into his heavenly kingdom, is our ardent desire. Amen.

R. S. MEEKS.